



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Martin O'Malley Opens Maryland Swine Flu Command Center Statewide Monitoring and Response System in Place No Swine Flu Reported in Maryland as illness spreads across U.S.

Baltimore, MD (April 27, 2009) - Governor Martin O'Malley announced the opening of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DHMH) Swine Flu Operation Center in Baltimore today. The DHMH Office of Preparedness and Response has begun monitoring and assisting health care partners across Maryland to prepare and respond should the swine flu present a health emergency for state residents.

"We want the citizens of Maryland to know that their government is doing everything we can at this time to prepare for any contingency with regard to swine flu," said Governor Martin O'Malley, "I want to thank our health and emergency professionals for their quick and thorough efforts as we take these precautions to protect the citizens of Maryland."

There are no known cases or probable cases of this novel strain of swine flu in Maryland to date. All Maryland hospitals, health centers, clinics, doctors and other health care providers are now on alert with specific instructions to identify and manage accordingly, anyone who calls or visits their facilities while experiencing flu-like symptoms.

Maryland has extended the existing influenza surveillance period beyond its original end date of May 20, 2009, until further notice. Any health care provider with a suspected case of flu is requested to contact their local health department and submit samples to the State Public Health Laboratory for testing on all cases of flu-like illness that fit the appropriate characteristics.

"Just as we've planned and practiced for years, we are taking the necessary precautions to be ready if and when swine flu comes to Maryland," said John M. Colmers, DHMH secretary. "We want to emphasize that the greatest tool for combating this serious health threat is the common sense approach anyone can take, such as washing your hands frequently and covering your mouth when you cough."

As with any other seasonal flu, Marylanders should be advised to exercise precautionary measures to avoid becoming ill or spreading an illness to others.

For more information on swine flu Marylanders can go to: <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/>
or <http://www.maryland.gov/>

The Common Sense Swine Flu Checklist

If YOU have a Flu-like Illness

Including:
Fever greater than or equal to 100°F (37.8°C)
AND
Cough
OR
Sore throat

And

History of TRAVEL to an AFFECTED AREA within 7 days of illness onset

Or

*CONTACT WITH AN ILL PERSON fitting the travel description above
WITHIN 7 DAYS of illness onset*

Then

Stay Home and CALL your Doctor

IF no link to *affected areas* or *travelers from affected areas*, but you are mildly sick with flu-like symptoms – STAY HOME and recover, unless you have the following worrisome **WARNING SIGNS:**

For Children

Emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting

- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

For Adults

Emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Common Sense Precautions Include

- Wash your hands often, especially after coughing, sneezing, and wiping or blowing the nose.
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Use paper tissues when wiping or blowing your nose; throw tissues away after each use.
- Stay away from crowded living and sleeping spaces, if possible.

Stay home and avoid contact with other people to protect them from catching your illness.

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